



Realising the promise of Tanzania's wildlife management areas

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Realising the promise of Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas

Tanzania's Community Wildlife Management Areas (CWMAs) – originally called Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) – were intended to benefit both people and wildlife. However, for their first two decades, CWMAs have been characterised by land conflict, wildlife damage to people and crops, lack of tourism potential and high administration costs among other negative impacts. Can rethinking how CWMAs are run bring about the benefits once promised?

Key Messages

- Most CWMAs are not financially viable.
- Rethinking the division of CWMA revenues could make them more financially and socially viable.
- Giving CWMA villagers sustainable access to key natural resources will benefit rural livelihood security and reduce the potential for conflict.
- Revenue sharing between CWMA villages should be based on negotiations between the villages, considering costs borne related to human-wildlife conflict, tourism investments, and land surrendered to CWMA.
- Fair and transparent consultation and planning for new CWMAs will improve the likelihood of community buy-in.
- Empowering villages to make changes to CWMA plans will make CWMAs more legitimate, and so more sustainable.
- CWMAs should be established in areas with tourism potential, to increase their chances of financial sustainability.

Re-visiting CWMAS

Next year is the 20th anniversary of the formal adoption of WMAs (now CWMAs) by Tanzania's Wildlife Policy. CWMAs were intended to increase participation of local communities in the management of wildlife resources and to deliver benefits for local communities, wildlife and the environment¹. With 22 CWMAs now operating and another 16 planned, it is a good moment to ask how well the Areas are working and for whom.

This briefing considers the results of research on CWMAs in Tanzania, with a specific focus on the results of a multidisciplinary evaluation of CWMAs by the Poverty and Ecosystem Impacts of Payments for wildlife conservation initiatives in Africa: Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas (PIMA) project. From 2013-2016, PIMA explored six WMAs, taking in diverse environments, a range of governance structures and rural populations whose livelihoods depend upon various strategies. The team worked with civil society organisations and government research institutes, and sought input from wildlife users, practitioners and policy-makers.

Results

CWMAs were designed to create a win-win situation for people and wildlife outside government-run national parks and game reserves¹. However, PIMA research suggests they are failing to deliver for people, while their effects on wildlife are yet to be assessed.

CWMA income and employment

Village income from CWMAs is often not sufficient to offset or compensate for wildlife damage to crops and livestock, or the opportunity costs of CWMAs borne by local communities.

Retention of parts of revenue by central government and CWMA administration costs erode tourism revenues.



Photo credit: Katherine Homewood

For example, annual revenue for Burunge CWMA in 2014/15 was between US\$3 and US\$4 per person, yet Burunge is second only to Ikona CWMA in terms of revenue generation. Most CWMA are not financially viable and will not be in the future².

CWMAs create few opportunities, e.g. in tourism, to diversify local livelihoods away from land-based strategies such as agriculture and livestock keeping.

Access to land and natural resources

People living in CWMA villages find it more difficult than those in non-CWMA villages to access key natural resources such as firewood and grazing land.

This finding is significant because considerable production can be lost through restrictions on resource access for rural land- and natural resources-dependent households. PIMA's research shows that livestock, crops and natural resources contribute between 65% and 85% of household incomes in villages inside and outside CWMA.

Land conflict

The potential for land conflict has been increased in CWMA. This is a result of several factors:

- CWMA implementation has been characterised by manipulation of participatory processes and haphazard land-use planning leading to land and boundary conflicts, evictions and displacement^{3,4}.
- The steady increase in land under conservation regimes is squeezing a growing and land-dependent population⁵.
- Local population growth, agriculture-led opportunities and pressure from wildlife (notably elephants) are changing the demand for land over time, which CWMA often cannot accommodate⁶.
- CWMA revenue is usually shared equally among all village members, regardless of how much land a village has contributed, its resident wildlife or its tourism potential. For example, in Burunge, four villages are rarely visited by the larger wildlife species of interest to tourists. Villages such as these have sometimes been viewed as 'free-riding'; that is, not bearing the costs of CWMA such as wildlife damage while benefiting from equal revenue sharing. At the same time, these villages perceive restrictions on their land as severely compromising their development opportunities⁷.
- In some areas, pressure from tourism investors has led to the establishment of exclusive 'wilderness areas', further restricting land and resources⁸.

Governance

Poor process and a lack of transparency in setting up CWMA have led to a lack of CWMA legitimacy from the outset⁹. A lack of accountability and responsiveness by CWMA managers has added to the potential for conflict.

For example, villagers often fail to realise that as soon as a village assembly approves the surrender of village land to a CWMA they are also surrendering the power to make rules for how this land is used¹⁰, and it is virtually impossible for dissenting communities or villages to undo a CWMA once it is established¹¹. The politics of CWMA render individual CWMA projects 'too big to fail', although the reality can make it hard if not impossible to establish a financially viable and socially acceptable CWMA¹².

While there are examples of responsible leadership⁷, CWMA leadership positions and privileges have at times been dominated by a few individuals¹³.

Gender issues

Women and women-headed households generally gain less and lose more by CWMA membership. CWMA restrictions impact adversely on rural women relying on crops, livestock, land, water, fuel and building materials. In particular, injury and deaths to people and livestock and damage to crops from wildlife cause greater concerns for women than for men. Women are poorly engaged in or informed about CWMA activities and finance, with limited participation or capacity building reserved for them.

Wildlife damage

Households in CWMA villages face greater damage from wildlife than in similar villages that are not members of a CWMA. Wildlife damage, including human deaths, and crop and livestock losses, is not properly investigated or compensated and this contributes significantly to local resentment against conservation and, in some instances, to violence against wildlife¹⁴.



Photo credit: Aidan Keane

Table 1: Effects of current CWMA management strategies and suggested solutions

Problem	Result	Recommendation
Large share of revenue apportioned to central government and for CWMA management.	Negligible income for village development.	Revise revenue sharing between central government and CWMA, and between CWMA management and member villages.
The 'equal benefit sharing' principle for villages within CWMA.	Mutual resentment between villages.	Revisit system for sharing between CWMA partner villages.
Reduced access to key natural resources and land.	Compromised household incomes and livelihoods.	Rethink access conditions to ensure both sustainable livelihoods and conservation.
Lack of transparency in CWMA implementation.	Villagers fail to understand implications of CWMA agreements.	Ensure free, prior and informed consent when establishing WMAs; and effective accountability processes for CWMA once established.
Changing population-to-land ratio.	Pressure on grazing and agricultural lands.	Introduce realistic assessments of future needs. Empower communities to change CWMA management plans – and pull out if necessary.
Poor protection from wildlife and no compensation for crop damage and livestock losses.	Human, crop and livestock damage by wildlife. Local resentment of and resistance towards conservation actors.	Re-balance protection against wildlife damage vs anti-poaching. Institute awareness training, and monitoring, evaluation and compensation mechanisms. Empower village authorities to protect people against animals.

Next steps

CWMAs are failing to provide villages with enough tourism income to make them economically viable. High administrative costs, a lack of transparent consultation, failure to tackle wildlife damage and unsustainable restrictions on access to essential natural resources encourage conflict and rule-breaking. A re-balancing of priorities could help resolve many of these issues.

The following are policy and practice recommendations arising from the PIMA project from which protected area managers and environmental policymakers elsewhere may learn:

Invest in communities. The Tanzanian Government can support financially viable CWMA by revising the State-CWMA revenue share (effectively taxation) in favour of CWMA, and the CWMA-village revenue sharing in favour of villages. Investing the revenue in community benefits, such as steps to reduce and compensate wildlife damage, will also help to reduce conflict.

Transfer of revenue from Game Reserves and National Parks to CWMA that serve as corridors between and/or buffer zones for these reserves and parks, generating positive economic conditions for them, should be considered. Global donor assistance currently flows to CWMA to protect wildlife. Matching donor funds need to be sought to support local livelihoods and development aspirations.

Grant access. Access to key natural resources in CWMA should be balanced in ways that support both local livelihoods and environmental sustainability,

for example through access to dry season grazing in northern Tanzania: access which is currently granted in some areas, but not in others. This should include regulated access to non-permanent agriculture on CWMA lands when compatible with tourism interests.

Be realistic. Financial viability and economic assessments need to include opportunity costs incurred by villagers losing access to productive resources.

Be transparent. Full disclosure of the potential benefits and costs when setting up new CWMA would encourage negotiation and is more likely to ensure compliance. The consultation and planning process must be fair and transparent, with free, prior and informed consent for communities.

Re-train. CWMA staff need to be aware of, and sympathetic to, community priorities and needs. Community representatives need to understand they are accountable to CWMA village residents.

Empower communities. Communities need to be able to make changes to CWMA management and land use planning so CWMA can evolve to reflect changing needs. Communities should be able to withdraw from CWMA that are unworkable and/or impose unacceptable costs.

Protect people. Effective policies are needed to protect people and property from rampant wildlife. Conservation workers should be clear in their signals and actions that local people deserve as much attention and support as wildlife.

About this briefing

This briefing was informed by PIMA, an international interdisciplinary collaboration involving: Professor Katherine Homewood, University College London (UCL); Professor Jens Friis Lund, University of Copenhagen; Dr Aidan Keane, University of Edinburgh, formerly Imperial College London; Dr Maurus Msuha, Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI); Professor Neil Burgess, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC); Joseph Olila, Tanzania Natural Resource Forum (TNRF), Dr Martin Nielsen, University of Copenhagen; Jevgeniy Bluwstein, University of Copenhagen; Anthony Dancer, Imperial College London.

About the ESPA Programme

ESPA is a global development research programme established in 2009 with funding from the Department for International Development (DFID), the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). ESPA is one of the most comprehensive research programmes exploring the linkages between ecosystem services and human wellbeing. ESPA aims to provide new world-class research evidence demonstrating how ecosystem services can reduce poverty and enhance wellbeing for the world's poor.

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